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### **OBEY GETS UPDATE AT WAUSAU VA CLINIC**

#### **LOCAL CLINIC FOCUSES EXPANDED SERVICES ON AREA VETERANS AND THEIR NEEDS**

WAUSAU, WI – Seventh District Congressman Dave Obey (D-WI) was at the Wausau VA Clinic today for an update on the work they're doing and to meet the staff. This year, the clinic transitioned from being a contracted services facility to one fully staffed by VA employees. Since the transition, the clinic has seen a 14% increase in enrollments and has grown from serving about 1,000 veterans in 1998 to more than 4,000 veterans this year, including 350 for mental health care.

"I'm happy that we've been able to get more money into the veterans' healthcare system over the last three years to improve the level of care provided to the people who have sacrificed so much in service to our country, and I'm glad to be here to see firsthand how things are going here in Wausau," Obey told the clinic staff.

Over the last three years, Obey, who serves as the Chairman of the House Appropriations Committee, has overseen the largest increase in funding for VA healthcare services, and pushed through the House the largest expansion of GI education benefits since the creation of the GI Bill in 1945.

This year, Obey cleared the way, and the House voted for, another top priority for the veteran community – advanced funding of the VA healthcare system. "By providing appropriations two years out, advanced funding allows the VA to plan better and ensures veterans some certainty in their health services," Obey said.

The Clinic serves veterans from Lincoln, Marathon, Portage, and Price Counties, and is seeing a steady increase in demand as troops return from Iraq and Afghanistan.

“One of the biggest problems with this war is that there’s been no shared sacrifice. Our service members and their families have been the only ones asked to sacrifice at all; and they’ve been asked again, and again, and again,” Obey said. “That’s why we need to support our men and women serving abroad and when they return home; because they’ve earned more than just another salute.”

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